

REMARKS

Applicants have amended their claims in order to further define various aspects of the present invention. Specifically, Applicants are adding new claim 21 to the application. Claim 21, dependent on claim 1, recites that the additive gas is selected from the group consisting of (a) carbon monoxide (CO) gas and (b) methane (CH₄) gas diluted with an argon (Ar) gas. In connection with claim 21, note previously submitted claims 3 and 4.

The restriction requirement set forth on page 2 of the Office Action mailed June 8, 2006, is noted. Applicants respectfully elect the Group I claims (that is, claims 1, 3-5, 13-18 and 20, which the Examiner indicates are drawn to a plasma apparatus, as well as newly added claim 21). This election is made without traverse.

The election-of-species requirement set forth on page 3 of the Office Action mailed June 8, 2006, is noted. Applicants respectfully elect Species A, directed to the embodiment where the additive gas is carbon monoxide. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 3, 5, 13-18 and 20, of the elected Group I claims, read on the elected species.

Applicants respectfully traverse this election-of-species requirement, and particularly traverse the conclusion by the Examiner that, currently, no claims are generic. In this regard, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 5, 13-18, 20 and 21 are generic to the listed species. That is, for example, claim 1 recites a source of an additive gas containing carbon, and claim 21 recites that the additive gas is selected from the group consisting of (a) carbon monoxide gas and (b) methane gas diluted with an argon gas. Claims 12-18 and 20, while further defining the apparatus of the current claims, do not further define the source of an additive gas containing carbon.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 5, 13-18, 20 and 21 read on both of Species A and Species B, and thus are generic claims to Species A and Species B.

Upon allowance of one of these generic claims, it is respectfully submitted that the non-elected Species B (that is, claim 4, directed to the additive gas being a methane gas diluted with an argon gas) should be re-joined in the application, where claims directed to Species B are made dependent on an allowed generic claim.

In view of the foregoing, examination of claims which are both Group I claims, and claims reading on Species A, is respectfully requested. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 3, 5, 13-18, 20 and 21 are to be considered on the merits in the above-identified application.

Applicants request any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper be charged to the Deposit Account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (case 6348.43545X00), and credit any excess payment of fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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